In the Claims:

Please amend the claims according to the following listing of claims and substitute it for all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface, comprising the steps of:

   (a) disposing a capacitor plate above a wafer surface on which electrostatic charges are to be scanned, wherein the capacitor plate vomprises a plurality of capacitor sub-plates electrically insulated from each other;

   (b) using a movable probe to measure voltages at various locations at the capacitor plate;

   (c) collecting the measured voltage distribution; and

   (d) examining the collected voltage distribution to identify areas on the wafer surface correspondingly to high electrostatic charge density.

2. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 1, wherein the wafer contains a dielectric layer at its outmost surface.

3. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 2, wherein the dielectric layer is an oxide layer.

4. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 1, wherein the method is performed following a cleansing step using pure water or de-ionized water to remove particles or other impurities on the wafer surface.

5. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 1, wherein the capacitor plate is structured such that it can be moved both vertically and horizontally above the wafer surface.

6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) A method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface, comprising the steps of:

(a) disposing a capacitor plate above a wafer surface on which electrostatic charges are to be scanned, wherein the capacitor plate comprises a plurality of capacitor sub-plates electrically insulated from each other;

(b) attaching a probe on the capacitor plate;

(c) moving the capacitor plate horizontally above the wafer surface so as to allow the probe to measure voltages at various locations above the wafer surface;

(d) collecting the measured voltage distribution; and

(e) examining the collected voltage distribution to identify areas on the wafer surface correspondingly to high electrostatic charge density.

8. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 7, wherein the wafer contains a dielectric layer at its outmost surface.

9. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 8, wherein the dielectric layer is an oxide layer.

10. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 7, wherein the method is performed following a cleansing step using pure water or de-ionized water to remove particles or other impurities on the wafer surface.

11. (original) The method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 7, wherein the capacitor plate is structured such that it can be moved both vertically

and horizontally above the wafer surface.

12. (currently amended) An apparatus method for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface, comprising the steps of:

(a) movable capacitor plate to be placed above a wafer surface on which electrostatic charges are to be scanned, wherein the capacitor plate comprises a plurality of capacitor sub-plates electrically insulated from each other;

(b) a movable probe to measure voltages at various locations at the capacitor plate; and

(c) a recorder to collect and record the measured voltage distribution.

13. (original) The apparatus for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 12, wherein the wafer contains a dielectric layer at its outmost surface.

14. (original) The apparatus for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 13, wherein the dielectric layer is an oxide layer.

15. (original) The apparatus for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 12, which is to be performed following a cleansing step using pure water or de-ionized water to remove particles or other impurities on the wafer surface.

16. (original) The apparatus for detecting electrostatic charges on a wafer surface according to claim 12, wherein the capacitor plate is structured such that it can be moved both vertically and horizontally above the wafer surface.

17. (cancelled)